

The Power of Violence and Resolution,
when apply'd to RELIGION.

A
51
SERMON

Preach'd at the
Morning Lecture

IN
EXON,

ON
Thursday Sept. 9. 1714.

By WILLIAM BARTLET.

LONDON:

*Printed for JOHN CLARK, at the Bible and Crown
in Cheapside near the Poultry, 1714.*

Price Six-pence.

The Power of Violence and Revolution
in the American Republic

STERN MON

Morning Journal



By WILLIAM BARTLET

LONDON

Printed by J. G. & Co. in the Strand

t
v
t

v
an
m
M
R
m
V
loy
bu
M

ser
En
do
yo

THE
PREFACE.

I HAVE been prevail'd with to suffer the Publication of this Discourse. It has little (besides the Subject) to recommend it, but its Freedom and Plainness. It treats of the Kingdom of God, and that it seeks to advance, and shews Men, how by glorious Toils to obtain.

'TIS well known, that all Essays and Endeavours of this Nature, both from the Pulpit and the Press, all Motives and Arguments whatever, are little enough to prevail with Men to engage in good Earnest and with equal Resolution and Vigour in this Attempt. Too much therefore cannot be said nor with too great Vehemence urg'd on this Score. Most Men lose the Kingdom, not for want of seeking, but for want of striving and offering Violence. Many seek, but few strive to enter there.

IF this poor Discourse therefore, may but serve to excite any to the arduous and noble Enterprize; If it may but kindle an holy Ardor in the Hearts and Breasts of some of the younger Generation, to whom it is particularly

larly directed and accommodated; if it may be of Use to quicken any in their Way to the heavenly Country; if it may but be their humble Monitor on the Road, to jog and awaken 'em, and sometimes prompt 'em to mend their Pace, and advance with a little more Briskness and Resolution; especially, if it may in any wise conduce to the putting of but one Soul into the actual and final Possession of this Kingdom; In a Word, if it may but in any Respects be serviceable in this declining Age, to the promoting of the blessed Cause and Interest of languishing Religion; under any of these Views, I am easy as to its Publication, with all its Imperfections; and thankful for the Opportunity of Contributing my poor Endeavours, to the obtaining of any of those great and blessed Ends.

William Bartlet.

MATTH. XI. 12.

From the Days of John the Baptist, until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence, and the Violent take it by Force.

AS Youth is the most active Stage of Life, it is the most proper upon all Accounts, for the Exercise of this Violence. I judg'd it not unreasonable therefore at this Time, to set the glorious Enterprize in my Text before you; that so that Age, which is most of all dispos'd to Violence in all its Proceedings, may have its natural Force and Activity directed into the right Channel. Here's a noble Attempt worthy your utmost Toils and Labours!

From the Days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence, i. e. From the Time of JOHN's appearing, to preach the Kingdom and to prepare the Way of the MESSIAH: From the Day of his shewing unto ISRAEL, until now, the Kingdom of Heaven, i. e. the Kingdom of Grace here, and the Kingdom of Glory hereafter suffereth Violence, i. e. yields, surrenders, and sets open its Gates: And the Violent take it by Force. Resolv'd Souls crowd and press into it, and by a Kind of Violence, seize the glorious and immortal Prize.

6 The Power of Violence and Resolution

From the Days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence, and the Violent take it by Force. In speaking to which Words, I shall,

I. Shew, in what Respect the Kingdom of Heaven may be said to suffer Violence.

II. Confirm and exemplify it.

III. Shew, why it is said to suffer Violence from the Days of John Baptist.

IV. Apply.

I. I am to shew in what Respects the Kingdom of Heaven may be said to suffer Violence. It may be said to suffer Violence in these several Respects.

1. In Respect of the Multitude that now press into it.

2. In Respect of the Quality of those who seize it.

3. In Respect of the Manner of their seizing it.

1. The Kingdom of Heaven may be said to suffer Violence in Respect of the Multitude, that (in these last Days especially) press into it. A Multitude in this Case looks like an Invasion and carries the Appearance of Violence. The Law and the Prophets were until JOHN, and since that Time the Kingdom of God is preached, and EVERY Man PRESSETH into it. Such Numbers have entred Heaven in these last Days, that they appear like a Multitude, crouding and pressing into the Gates of a besieged City, and in such a Case, we say, The City suffered Violence. Such a Violence the Kingdom of Heaven suffered, when JERUSALEM and all JUDEA and the REGION about JORDAN went out and were baptiz'd of JOHN, confessing their Sins. Such a Violence again was offered to this Kingdom,

LUC. xvi.
16.

MAT. iii. 5,
6.

when no less than 3000 Souls were actually converted at one Time, by one of St. PETER'S Sermons after Christ's Resurrection. If any think it improper to call that *little Flock* a *Multitude*, which the Scriptures take Care to represent as a small Number, I grant, that compar'd with those that *reject* the Gospel, they are but a small Number that *receive it*, but consider'd in themselves, they are as St. JOHN calls them in the Revelations, *A Multitude which no Man can number.*

Rev. vii.
9.

2. The Kingdom of Heaven may be said to suffer Violence in Regard of the *Quality* of those that seize it: If we consider not only *how many* but what *kind* of Persons they are, that are pressing into it. Thus, in these last Days especially, we behold PUBLICANS, HARLOTS, HEATHENS, PRODIGALS, and the worst and greatest of Sinners, arising and taking this Kingdom. Can such enter Heaven without *Violence*, or wear the Crown but after an *hard* and *difficult* Combat? When *such* repent and seize the glorious Prize, when we behold the most *flaming* Sinners and such as were at the greatest *Distance* from this Kingdom, quitting their impious Courses, leaving their Riots and Debauches, *returning* as from a *far Country* and pressing in to the Kingdom before others, who were nearer to it; How justly may it be affirmed, that the Kingdom of Heaven *suffereith Violence.*

But 3. The Kingdom of Heaven may be especially said to suffer Violence in regard of the Manner of Mens seizing it. Because herein

1. They offer Violence to themselves.
2. They offer Violence to all that oppose them.
3. They offer a Kind of Violence to God himself.

8 The Power of Violence and Resolution

1. They offer Violence to themselves, in taking this Kingdom. What less is implied in all the Pains and Self-denials they undergo to obtain it? See what Violence they offer to their own Flesh in the severest Acts and Instances of Mortification. They pluck out right Eyes, and cut off right Hands for the Sake of this Kingdom; They set a Knife to the Throat of every Irregular Appetite and Affection, of every unruly Lust and Passion; They tear the glittering Snake from their Breasts how close soever it twine, and cast it from them with a just Indignation: They offer Violence to their evil Habits and Customs, break their Bands asunder and cast their Cords from them. Nay, see what Violence they are ready to offer to humane Nature, in a Sight of Afflictions and Tribulations, and even in the very fiery Trial it self; how ready to run through Fire and Water and a thousand Deaths and Dangers, to seize this Crown and possess this Kingdom. Thus they offer Violence to themselves.

2. They offer Violence to all that oppose them. To a tempting Devil, and all his restless Clamours and Solicitations, they stedfastly resist him. All the Opposition that the Prince of Darkness can make, serves but to raise their Courage and inflame their Zeal. Though all the Devils in Hell oppose their Passage, they resolve to possess the Kingdom. Moreover, they offer Violence to all the Flatteries and Insinuations of a deceiving World. They generously trample upon all its Honours, Pleasures and Riches, and force their Way through all its dangerous Snares to yonder Kingdom. Nay, not even the most indissoluble Ties and Obligations of Blood and Nature are exempted from this Violence. Thus said JEREM, "If my Father and
" Mother

" Mother did with Tears intreat me, if my
 " Wife did hang about my Neck, and my
 " Children clasp about my Feet, to beseech
 " me to leave Christ, I wou'd cast 'em all off,
 " Father, Mother, Wife and Children, and
 " say, *Farewel all, Welcome JESUS.*" This
 was verify'd in the Noble Marquis of *Vico*.
 And is not this to take the *Kingdom* by *Violence*?

3. They offer a kind of *Violence* to God him-
 self in taking of this *Kingdom*. What less is
 implied in their incessant *Prayers*, *Tears* and
Cries, by which they, as it were, besiege Hea-
 ven and take it by *Storm*. By their unwearied
Applications they wrest the Blessing out of
 God's Hands by a kind of *Violence*; *Let me go*,
 says the Angel, *for the Day breaketh: I will not*
let thee go, says the resolv'd Patriarch, *except*
thou blest me; and he blessed him there: By their
 warm and renew'd *Assaults*, they force the Gates
 of Heaven and take the Crown. They cry
 mightily, they grow importunate upon every Re-
 fusel, and resolve not to take a Repulse; like
 the poor *Widow* in the *Gospel*, they give God
 no rest till they be heard. And what is this
 but to offer a kind of *Violence* to God himself?
Let me alone, says God to Moses, as if the
Importunity of this *Man of God* were not to be
 resisted even by the *Almighty*.

And thus I have shewn in what respects the
Kingdom of Heaven suffereth *Violence*. I proceed
 in the

II. Place, *To Confirm and Exemplify it*, and
 this I shall do very briefly. The Matter of
 Fact is plain, and needs not many Words. What
 resolv'd Soul was ever kept out of this *King-*
dom? To make this appear,

10 The Power of Violence and Resolution

Look where the fore-mention'd *Harlots, Publicans* and Persons of the worst Character go up and by Faith, possess the *Good Land*.

Luke vii.
38.

Look where *MARY*, a Woman that was a Sinner, a great Sinner, a Woman of a very bad Character, takes this Kingdom by Violence. She that washed *JESUS Feet* with her Tears, and wiped them with the Hairs of her Head, to whom *JESUS* said, *Thy Sins be forgiven thee*.

Matt. viii.
5.

Look where the Centurion, by a profound Humility, and a great and marvellous Faith, presseth into this Kingdom before those that were nearer to it. I have not found so great Faith, saith *CHRIST*, *no not in ISRAEL*.

Matt. xv.
22.

Behold again the *Woman of CANAAN*, a poor Stranger, by a resolv'd and unwearied Importunity, that would take no denial, offering Violence to this Kingdom. After all the mortifying neglects and disappointments she meets with, she persists in her humble Cries, *LORD help me*; nay, not even the last humbling Repulse could silence her, when she was told, *It was not meet to give the Childrens Bread to Dogs*: Truth *LORD*, saith she, yet the Dogs may eat the Crumbs that fall from the Childrens Table, and still urges her Request, till she extorts the glorious Acknowledgement from *CHRIST'S Mouth*, *O Woman, great is thy Faith*.

Luke xiii.
42.

Behold again, the poor dying Thief upon the Cross, seizing this Kingdom by Violence in his last Moments. See when by a strong and victorious Faith, in the midst of his expiring Agonies, he knocks successfully at Heaven's Gates, and forceth (as it were) an immediate entrance into Paradise.

Acts ii.
41.

Look again, where the *Primitive Christians*, spoken of before, take Heaven by the same Violence,

Violence ; see how they croud in *Multitudes* thro' the *Gates* into the *City*.

Once more, look where the *Holy Martyrs*, by the same *Violence*, scale *Heaven* (as it were) and mount up thither in their *Chariots of Fire* : First, offer up their *Bodies* as a *Sacrifice*, and then with the *Angel* ascend to *Heaven* in the *Flame*.

Yet once more look and see, how many *holy* and *resolv'd Souls* in our own *Times*, are, by the same *Violence*, seizing this *Crown*, and bearing away this *glorious Prize*. Behold some among your selves, by the same *Faith* and *Patience*, by the same *Sufferings* and *Self-denials*, by the same *incessant Prayers*, *Tears* and *Labours*, offering *Violence* to this *Kingdom*. Blessed be God, we have some, though too few instances of such *resolv'd Souls*, that will have *Heaven* at any rate, and gain the *Prize* whatever it cost them.

This may serve to *Confirm* and *Exemplify* the *Doctrine*. I proceed in the

III. and last Place to shew, Why the *Kingdom of Heaven* is said to suffer *Violence* from the *Days of JOHN BAPTIST*. Here you must observe, that this is not to be understood as *absolutely* exclusive of the *Times* before *JOHN*, or as if *sincere* and *resolv'd Persons*, in any *Age* or *Time* whatever, were denied *Admission* into this *Kingdom*, but only as importing the *greater Advantages* and *Encouragements* of our *later Times*.

This being premis'd, the *Reasons* are manifest, why the *Kingdom of Heaven* is said to suffer *Violence* from the *Days of JOHN*.

12 The Power of Violence and Resolution

1. The first Reason is taken from *the greater Extent of this Kingdom since that Time*. From the Time of JOHN'S appearing, a more general and extensive Commission has been given forth to preach this Kingdom to *all the World*, and to invite *all Nations* into it. The Gates have been made wider, (since his Days) the Entrance into it enlarg'd, and the Pale remov'd, and therefore greater Numbers have press'd into it. Before JOHN'S Appearance, that Kingdom was confin'd to the JEWISH Nation, but now the Partition-Wall is broken down, and GENTILES, as well as JEWS, are called to offer Violence hereto: All the Tribes of the Earth, as well as those of ISRAEL, now come up and possess it. The distant Isles now run and seize it, and those that were accounted Aliens from the Commonwealth of ISRAEL, and were Strangers to the Covenants of Promise, are now called to be Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and Fellow-Heirs of this Kingdom. This is one Reason.

2. Another Reason, why the Kingdom of Heaven is said to suffer Violence from the Days of JOHN, is from the brighter Revelation of it from that Time. This Kingdom now appears in a better Light, and shines more illustriously, and therefore Men press into it. Its Glory is since that Time render'd conspicuous, and the Way to it so visibly design'd and mark'd out, by a bright Truth of Gospel Light, that we have now the greatest Advantages of going up to possess it. Life and Immortality are now brought to such a clear and convincing Light, as may well invite all the World to offer Violence to it. The interposing Veil is now drawn, and we may look in and see the Glory of God shining between the Cherubims. The immercessible Crown and the glorious Prize are now set in such an advantageous

vanagious Light, that 'tis no wonder to see Men grasping at 'em with *all their might*. We may cease to wonder then, that such a *Multitude*, croud after *this greatest of all the Prophets*, this *more than a Prophet*, considering what glorious Things he brought to Light, and how he usher'd in the *dawning of that bright Day*, that appear'd at the *rising of the Son of Righteousness*. Therefore, from *his Days* and forward, the *Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence*, and Men at any rate press into it.

3. Another Reason of its suffering *Violence* from the *Days of JOHN*, is, from the more plentiful *Effusion of the Spirit of God upon Mens Hearts*, (since that time) powerfully exciting them to and assisting them in this holy *Violence*. The *Times* that succeeded *JOHN*, have been *Times* not only of brighter *Light*, but of greater *Grace, Power and Efficacy* on Mens Hearts. The *Law* came by *MOSES*, but *Grace* by *JESUS*, who immediately follows *JOHN*. We are, from *those Days* therefore under a better *Dispensation* on account of its *Aids and Influences*, as well as of its *Light and Guidance*: We have felt more *Power* as well as more *Light* from that *Time*. Who can deny this? 'Tis plain, that Men have been from the *Days of JOHN*, in a very extraordinary manner, excited and stirred up to offer *Violence* to this *Kingdom*: More powerful *Aids* and *Helps* we have, as well as more pressing *Motives* and *Solicitations*. The *Spirit of God* has (since those *Days*) been more visibly at *Work* upon Mens Hearts, putting them upon the glorious *Enterprize*, strengthening their Hands, and encouraging their Hearts in their arduous *Attempt*, kindling a noble *Zeal* and *Ardour* in their Breasts, and inspiring them with unusual
Courage.

14 *The Power of Violence and Resolution*

Courage and Resolution, to conquer all Difficulties in their Way to this Kingdom.

And thus you see the Reasons why the Kingdom of Heaven is said to suffer Violence from the Days of JOHN the BAPTIST :

From the greater Extent of this Kingdom since that Time ;

From the brighter Light and clearer Revelation of it ;

From the greater Grace and Power of these Days.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

From what has been said of the Kingdom of Heaven's suffering Violence.

1. Hence learn, *How little ground there is for Despair, while Heaven yields to Mens Violence, and every Man, i. e. any Man, presseth into it. If Heaven were inaccessible, all the Violence in the World would be ineffectual ; but when we see it opening its Gates to the resolv'd Soul, see the vilest of Men and the greatest Sinners entering in and taking it by Violence, why should any be discourag'd ? Who need Despair, after ZACHEUS, after MARY MAGDALENE, after the PENITENT THIEF, after PUBLICANS and HARLOTS ? If these arise and take the Kingdom, what hinders me ? O my Soul, then take Heart after all thy desponding Fears ; as unlikely Persons as thy self have made the Attempt, and carried the Prize ! But,*

2. We learn farther, *That there is nothing to be done, however in Religion, without Violence. There is no hopes of obtaining the Kingdom without it. 'Tis an Enterprize that will cost Tears, and make the Soul flow down with Sweat.*

Non est e Terris Mollis Astra via.

Men must not expect to go to Heaven with their *Arms folded*, or without taking them out of their Bosom: How many think to swim thither with the *Stream*, but they forget that the *Current* sets against them? Alas! what will become then of those *Cowardly* and *Faint-hearted Christians*, that having put their Hand to the *Plough*, are return'd back again to a Life of *Ease* and *Indolence*?

Upon the whole, What can we think, my *Friends*, of those poor and feeble Attempts that the *Generality* of *Christians* are making upon this *Kingdom*? The Text says, *That the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence*, but I fear, a great many of us have persuaded our selves, that it may be taken without any *Violence* at all. What *Violence*, in the Name of *GOD*, do most of us offer, either to our selves, or to those *Enemies* that oppose our Passage, or to our *GOD*? I confess, if *Hearing* (or even *Preaching*) a few Sermons; if running over a few cold and formal *Prayers*, either in the *Closet* or the *Church*; if abstaining from the grosser *Pollutions* of the *World*; or even, if making a stricter *Profession* of Religion than others, were to offer *Violence*, a great many would take the *Kingdom* and gain the *Prize* at a cheap and easie rate: But if to offer *Violence*, be to Cut off *Right Hands*, and Pluck out *Right Eyes*, i. e. Lusts as near and dear as those; if to offer *Violence*, be to live a Life of assiduous Application to all the Duties of our holy Religion, be to pray fervently, and strive to an Agony, be to conquer our *Pride*, and govern our *Passions*, and subdue our *Appetites*, be to lead a Life of continual *Watchfulness* and

16 *The Power of Violence and Resolution*

Self-denial, in a Word, to live like the *Blessed* *JESUS* ; if this be to offer *Violence*, how few of us are like to obtain this *Kingdom* ?

3: From what has been said of the *Kingdom of Heaven's* suffering *Violence*, and of the violent *Man's* taking it by *Force*, we learn further, *The Power of Necessity and Resolution in Matters of Religion* ; I mean as supported by *Divine Grace*. *Necessity and Resolution* do great things in the common and ordinary *Affairs of Life* ; their *Power* is known and confess'd ; what great and almost incredible things are they the *Authors, Contrivers and Accomplishers* of ? 'Twas the Saying of a famous *HEATHEN*, That *Power dwells next Door to Necessity* : A *Man* does not know himself, what great and arduous *Things* he can do or suffer, before *Necessity* be upon him. In short, nothing can stand before the *Power of Necessity and Resolution* ; we see the marvellous *Effects* hereof before our *Eyes* every *Day* : Don't you see how it makes *Men* rise early and sit up late, and eat the *Bread of Carefulness* ? Don't you see how it makes *Poor Men* Sweat, and Labour, and Travel, and suffer a thousand *Hardships* and *Inconveniences* with amazing *Constancy* ? Don't you see how it puts *Men* upon the most desperate *Adventures* and *Enterprizes* for the *Recovery* of a *broken Fortune* ? And how it makes *Men* face all manner of *Storms* and *Hazards, Perils* and *Dangers*, both by *Sea* and *Land* ?

My *Friends*, if the *Power of Necessity and Resolution* together, be so great in the common *Affairs of Life*, what wou'd not these do when apply'd to *Religion* ? Will *Necessity* make a *Man* work hard, suffer much and undertake any thing rather than *Beg* or *Starve* ? And will it not make a *Man* do and suffer a thousand

times more for the obtaining of this Kingdom? Will it not make a Man watch diligently, and pray fervently, and strive abundantly, rather than perish everlastingly? Alas! what are the Necessities of this present World to those of the Soul and its eternal Concerns? A Man can better be without Food or Raiment, than without the Kingdom of Heaven. If then such be the Power of a lesser Necessity, what must the Power of a greater be? When once the Necessity of obtaining the Kingdom of Heaven appears to the Soul in a clear and perspicuous Light, how irresistible is the Conviction? What another Face does every thing about us put on? How serious and awful does every thing look? What other Thoughts have we streight, of GOD and CHRIST, of HEAVEN and HELL, of TIME and ETERNITY, and what other Impressions do these Things make henceforth on the Soul? Necessity sets Matters in another Light. Necessity answers every Excuse: 'Tis in vain to pretend, *There's a Lion in the Way, I shall be Slain in the Streets*: Under the apprehensions of this Necessity, the Man smites upon his Breast, and cries, *It must be done, my Soul*, there's no gainsaying, Heaven must be won; the Kingdom must be obtain'd; NECESSITY is upon me, I must through Fire and Water, and all Difficulties and Oppositions to this Kingdom; *it must be done, or I am undone for ever*. You see then the Power of Necessity and Resolution when apply'd to RELIGION, how these make the Kingdom of Heaven suffer Violence. O that we had but the Heart to make Trial.

4. Having observ'd in my foregoing Discourse, how this Kingdom suffereth Violence, especially from the Days of JOHN the BAPTIST.

18 *The Power of Violence and Resolution*

I hence observe, *the peculiar Advantages that are reserv'd for us.* O happy *We*, who live in those *happy Days and Times*, wherein this *Kingdom* suffereth *Violence*, and wherein we have such *special Advantages* above others, of seizing this *Crown*, and possessing this *glorious Inheritance*. How *near* are we brought to the *City Gates*, and what a *fair opportunity* have we of *entring in*? How should we *GENTILES* run and seize the *Crown*, while the *Children of the Kingdom* despise it; so shall we be gathered from the *Ends of the Earth*, to sit down with *ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB* in the *Kingdom of GOD*, when they shall be *cast out*? What a *glorious Light* shines around us, and directs our *Steps*! O if we had but *Hearts* to follow!

That we may set a *just Value* upon these *Privileges*.

1. *Let us be duely Thankful.* Let us *blefs* GOD for sending *JOHN the BAPTIST* to begin, and *JESUS* to compleat the brightness of this *Gospel-Day*. Let us *blefs* GOD that our *Lot* is fallen herein. Let us be *thankful* for the *glorious Light* and more *glorious Grace* that shines upon us. Let us adore that good *Providence* that has reserv'd us to these *better Days*, and has plac'd us amidst the *best Opportunities* and *Advantages* for our *Souls* and our *Salvation*.

2. *Let us take care to improve these Advantages.* Let us look to it that there be a due proportion between our *Goodness* and our *Light*. 'Tis a lamentable *Consideration*, that when there are so many *Advantages* to encourage us, so much *Light* to guide us, and so much *Grace* to help us, that there are still so few (comparatively) among us, that have *Hearts* to offer *Violence* to this *Kingdom*.

3. Let us consider and remember, that if we lose the Kingdom of Heaven under all these Advantages of taking it, we shall lose it with such killing Aggravations, as must make the Loss eternally insupportable. To lose such a Kingdom, to lose it too while others are offering Violence to it, and taking it in our sight, and to lose it now at last, when God has brought it within our reach, and set open its Gates before us, and offer'd to surrender it ! O who can bear the weight of such a Reflection ! Wo unto us if we be found haters of that Light, and despisers of that Grace, that would now assist us in taking this Kingdom ! Wo unto us, if now the Fences are broken down, if now the Way is clear'd, the most encouraging Prospect given, and the most infallible Success secur'd to us, we should now after all give up the glorious Prize ! O what an inbancement will it be of my Loss to all Eternity, to think Heaven was become attainable, the Design was practicable, and the Victory sure, if I had but in good earnest prosecuted it : The Kingdom of Heaven would have suffered Violence, the Gates of Glory would have certainly open'd, and I should undoubtedly have carried the glorious Prize, if I had not given out. Piercing Reflection ! O whither would a little more Patience and Resolution have carried me ? If I had but held on a little further, if I had but maintained the Combat a little longer, if I had but advanc'd another Step, if I had but parted with the other Lust, if I had but mortified the other darling Corruption, if I had but watch'd and pray'd, and strove and contended with a little more fervency and constancy, I might have possess'd the Kingdom, I might have had a Place among yonder shining Saints. O Fool that I was ! when I knew that this Kingdom suffered

Violence.

20 *The Power of Violence and Resolution*

Violence, that I spared any *Pains* and *Cost*, that I favour'd any *Lust*, that I stuck at any *Difficulty* to obtain it.

This leads me then to my *last Use*, and to what I chiefly aim at, and that is, to put you *All* upon this glorious *Enterprize* in my *Text*. If (as it has been abundantly made appear) this *Kingdom* indeed suffereth *Violence*, let us all be exhorted this *Day*, as one *Man*, to go up and possess it. Glorious Attempt! Who is not ready to engage in it? Do not your *Hearts* take *Fire* at the *Prospect*; Do you not begin to feel a noble *Ardour* kindle within you at the mention of it? Are you not all ready on the *first Call*, to buckle on the *Armour* of *Light*, and begin the glorious *Assault*?

I bring you glad *Tidings*, that *Heaven* yields to the *Humble*, *Bold* and *Resolute*, and that in despite of all *Opposition*, they win and wear the *Crown*.

Come, fear not, my *Brethren*, then let us go up. We shall certainly succeed in the glorious *Enterprize*. *Victory* is *sure*. We cannot lose the *Crown*, if we *strive* and *fight lawfully*. The *Gates* will open. We have no sooner taken up the *steadfast Resolution*, but we are already *Conquerors*. See, the *Kingdom* *surrenders*! Methinks we are entering in already, seizing the *Crowns* and the *Palms*, and taking possession of the goodly *Thrones* and *Manfions*. Come, be not *faint-hearted* then, we shall overcome the *steep Ascent*, and get above yonder *Clouds*. Let nothing dismay us.

'Tis very observable, (as one *Remarks*) that while the *GIANTS*, the *ANAKIMS*, and the *High-wall'd Cities* of *CANAAN*, ran in the *Heads* of the *Children* of *ISRAEL*, they could prevail nothing. The *Hearts* of the *People* fainted at the

Relation of the Spies, when they told 'em that the *Land* indeed was good, and the Country *desirable*; but at the same time represented the fair Cities as *impregnable*, the goodly Country as *inaccessible*, and in a Word, the whole *Attempt* and *Design* as *impracticable*, by reason of the mighty Enemies that forbad their Entrance. I say, the Hearts of the Children of ISRAEL fainted at *this Relation* of the Spies, till CALEB and JOSHUA stood forth before MOSES, and stilled the People, saying, *Let us go up at once and possess it, for we be able to overcome it, and shew'd 'em, how all these Difficulties, were as nothing, while God was with them.* Numb. xiii. 30.

Thus, my Friends, I am very sensible, that a great many *discouraging Reports* have been brought upon the great and good *Design* before us. But whatever these evil Reports are, whatever *Impossibilities* and *unsurmountable Difficulties* have been thrown in your Way, whatever *impassable Gulphs* you have heard or dream't of, whatever ANAKIMS and GIANTS forbid your Entrance, yet *fear not*, neither be *dismay'd*. As CALEB and JOSHUA stood up before the ISRAELITES, so all the *Ministers of Christ* here present *this Day*, stand forth before you, and with *one Voice*, contradict these evil Reports of Sinners and Devils, saying, *Fear not, but come let us go up at once and possess the Kingdom, for we be able to overcome in the Strength of the Lord.* Be not discouraged then, the Kingdom is yours, only *Rebel not against the Lord*, who hath commanded you to go up.

What remains then, but that we all *immediately*, and from this *Moment*, begin in good earnest to set our *Hearts* and *Faces* towards this Kingdom, and resolve to offer *Violence* to it? I wou'd, if possible, engage *all to a Man*, in this

this glorious Undertaking, but especially the young Persons here present ; if others decline it, I would put you upon the noble Attempt.

But as nothing is to be done or hop'd for in this glorious Design without Violence ; my Business at present, must be to endeavour to reconcile you to this Violence. You see I do not dissemble the Hardships and Difficulties of the Undertaking, but call you bravely to conquer 'em. And here give me leave to set a few Considerations before you,

1. Then, If you are call'd to Violence, yet remember it is for a Kingdom, and for the Kingdom of Heaven too. If it were for any thing less, you might think the Violence I have been describing, an hard Demand, and the Purchase dear ; but as it is for a Kingdom, and such a Kingdom, who can think any Violence too great ? " The Kingdoms of the Earth (as " one says) dazzle and astonish me, my Fancy " cannot comprehend, my Ambition cannot " aspire after their Grandeur and Glory, Ah ! " what then must the Kingdom of Heaven " be ? " An earthly Crown is thought a tempting Prize, what then must such an immarcescible Crown be, a Crown which never fadeth ? We see daily, what mighty Toils and Labours the Princes of this World chearfully undergo, to acquire and possess an Earthly Diadem ; what Armies they gather, through what Seas of Blood they wade, what Hazards they run, and with what Violence they contend for a little dying Empire ? And can we, my Friends, see others do so much for an Earthly Crown, and be content our selves to do and suffer so little for the Kingdom of Heaven ? Would a Man do so much for a little Royal State and Magnificence in this World, to sit among the Princes of the Earth.

Earth, and would he not do or suffer more to sit among the *Princes above*, to obtain a *Throne*, inherit a *Kingdom*, and eternally possess a *Royal Seat* in those shining Mansions. Think, mistaken Man, therefore after all, how little the most is thou canst do or suffer for such a *Kingdom*. Canst thou in thy own Conscience think, any *Violence* thou canst offer to thy *self*, or to a *tempting World* around thee, or any *Labours* or *Sufferings* whatever, too great for the obtaining such a *Kingdom*? If the Conflict be hard and difficult, yet is not the Self-denial glorious, the *Toil honourable*, and the *Agony well rewarded*.

2. Consider again, 'Tis a necessary and a prudent *Violence* that Religion is putting thee upon, in order to prevent a worse and a greater *Violence* hereafter. 'Tis better, as our SAVIOUR argues, to lose an *Eye* or an *Hand*, than to throw Body and Soul into Hell for ever. This is the awful *Dilemma* we are brought to, and we must do one or the other; either we must undergo the *Violence* of *Mortification* now, or of the never dying *Worm* hereafter. Either we must undergo the *Violence* of parting with our darling *Sins*, or of parting with *God*, *Heaven* and *Glory* for ever. There is no one doubts, but that 'tis hard to *Flesh* and *Blood* to exercise such a *Violence*, but that 'tis a difficult Task to maintain a constant and successful War with the *Devil* and the *Flesh*, and that the weary Soul is often made, like the gasping Slave, to pant for a Shade, and is many times ready to faint and succumb before the *Victory* be obtain'd: yet, nevertheless, if the Matter be seriously and deliberately weigh'd. What *Violence* of this kind, would not a Man undergo in this World, rather than be torn from the everlasting Embraces

of God, and the *ravishing Enjoyment* of Heaven and eternal Glory, and be sent into *Blackness* and *Darkness* for ever? Judge you, is not that, whatever it be, a *reasonable*, a *wise*, and a *merciful* Violence that prevents all this? And are not wicked Men really offering themselves the *greater Violence*? I appeal to you, whether is it a more dreadful *Act* of *Violence*, for a Man to exercise the greatest (*Rational*) Severity upon himself in *this World*, or to expose himself to the *merciless Fury* of an *eternal Storm*, that will beat with a never ceasing *Violence* on his naked Soul for ever? Whether is it a more frightful *Act* of *Violence*, for a Man to mortify his Lusts, or madly to throw Soul and Body over an *eternal Precipice*? Whether is it a more desperate and cruel *Act* of *Violence* to cut off an infected Member, and pluck out a beloved Eye, or to expose Soul and Body to the fiery displeasure of an *angry enraged God*, who will *tear us in pieces* when *there shall be none to deliver*? Nay, I am ready to appeal farther, whether such a *prudent Act* of *Violence* upon a Mans self now, is not in *Truth* rather an *Act* of the greatest *Tenderness* and *Compassion* that a Man can shew himself, and whether that be not a *false*, a *treacherous* and a *barbarous* Pity, by which a Man *s pares* himself to *undo* himself.

3. Consider again, *How the Saints of all Ages have been offering Violence to this Kingdom*, and how that without *Violence* none have obtained it. There have none been *Coorn'd* but who have used *Violence*, and strove lawfully for this Prize. All the Saints before us have sustained it. They had the same *Corruptions* to mortify, the same *Flesh* and *Blood* to conflict with, the same difficult *Steps* to make, the same *Opposition* to break through

through, and by the same *Sweat, Labour* and *Agonies* have they obtain'd Entrance into this *Kingdom*.

What glorious Instances could we mention: There's that of *ABRAHAM* called by *GOD* to offer his *Son ISAAC*. Can any *Act of Violence* be suppos'd greater than this, than for a tender-hearted *Father*, to be called by *GOD* to embroe his *Hands* in the *Blood* of an only and beloved *Son*, a *Son of the Promise* too? And yet this severe *Command* *ABRAHAM* is ready to comply with, whatever *Flesh and Blood* has to offer against it; putting off (as it were) the *Bowels* of a *Father*, he stands prepared with the bloody *Knife* in his *Hand*, to offer at the *Throat* of his beloved *ISAAC*: And, what think you, is it a harder demand on us to sacrifice a *Lust*, than on the *Father of the Faithful* to sacrifice an only *Son*?

As another glorious Instance of such *Violence*, shall I mention that of *MOSES* renouncing the *Crown of EGYPT*, to take up with an afflicted *Life*, amongst a despis'd *People*. Here's a *Man* bred to all the *Honours* and *Gallantry* of a *Court*, learned in all the *Wisdom* of the *EGYPTIANS*, and yet in the heat of *Youthful Ambition*, despising all the *Pleasures* and *Treasures* of *EGYPT*, quitting all the great *Hopes* and *Expectations* of *Empire* and *Honour*, for the sake of this *Kingdom*. When come to *Age*, he Heb. xi. generously refus'd to be called the *Son of PHAROAH'S* 24. *Daughter*, and chose rather to suffer *Affliction* with the *People of God*, having respect to the recompence of *Reward*, i. e. to the hopes of this *Kingdom* to come. Now what *Act of Violence* can we suppose greater than this? What are our little *Self-denials* to this? We never had, nor are like to have the *Temptations* of a *Crown*, nor the

26 *The Power of Violence and Resolution*

Charms and Pleasures of an EGYPTIAN Court, to quit for the Hopes of this Kingdom.

But instead of all other Instances of this kind, and beyond 'em all is that of the blessed Jesus himself. 'Tis true, he had no Sins to mortifie, nor Passions to subdue, nor Lusts to conquer, but he had Ease, Honour, Glory and an invaluable Life to sacrifice, for the obtaining of this Kingdom for us. He gave up all, and what is our little all to his. Not to mention his quitting the Realms of Light, and leaving the Bosom of his Father, &c. His whole Life on Earth, was one continued Act of Violence, from the Manger to the Cross, in an uninterrupted Course of the most arduous and difficult Services and Sufferings.

And now after these and innumerable other Instances of the like Nature, can we expect to take this Kingdom without Violence, or to be exempted from it?

4. I might mention again the Rage and Violence of Devils and Wicked Men, as a farther motive to us; the one in opposing our passage to this Kingdom, the other in working out our own Damnation: Shall Devils and wicked Men be content to take more pains to Damn themselves and us, than we to Save our selves? And yet 'tis manifest they do. Devils are at more pains to keep us out of this Kingdom, than we to possess it. Wicked Men take more pains to lose it than we to gain it. These last spare no Cost nor Labour to compass their own Ruin. They sit up later and rise earlier, and sacrifice their Life and Strength with more cheerfulness. They watch more than they that watch for the Kingdom. In a Word, they offer more Violence to the Kingdom of Darkness than others to the Kingdom of Light. They run with greater Violence

lence over the Precipice, than others fly from it.

5. I might mention again, *The Violence of the inanimate Creation it self, as a farther Reproach to our Neglect of it.* Is it not a Shame, that every thing about us should teach us *Violence*? Behold with what *Violence* the *Heavenly Bodies* are daily moving over our Heads, how swiftly they roll on in their several Orbs to do their Maker's Will. Hark! with what *Violence* the *Sea* roars, the *Tempest* beats and the *Stormy Wind* fulfilling his Will. See with what *Violence* the *Fire* burns, the *Rivers* flow, and *Time* it self hastens to its last Period. Nay, even see with what *Violence* your own *Blood* and *Spirits* move within you, and drive around your *Veins*. Not to mention the *Violence* that *Nature* it self must undergo at last, in all its *Changes* and *Convulsions*, to making way for the coming of this *Kingdom* in its final *Glory*.

6. I might mention again, *The short duration and continuance of this Violence, and the glorious Rest that will succeed it.* 'Tis with us as in a *Race*, in which the *Time of Violence* is but short. We have not long to strain and continue our utmost efforts. 'Tis but while we dwell in these *Mortal Bodies*, and while we remain in this *hostile Country*; and then what a glorious *Rest* succeeds? How sweet is the *Sleep* of a *labouring Man*? Thus, in what a blessed and calm *Serenity* and *Peace* will all this *Violence* issue at last? How tedious soever it may now be to *Flesh* and *Blood*, yet how easy and comfortable will it render our *Graves* in a little time, and above all, how sweet those *Times of Refreshing* that are coming from the *Presence of the Lord*?

28 The Power of Violence and Resolution

7. And lastly, There remains *one* very great Consideration behind, to reconcile us to this Violence. And that is, *That God is always near the Soul that offers Violence.* Such are not left to their own Strength, but may surely depend upon supernatural Aids. God does not call us in our Strength to remove Mountains, but whatever arduous Enterprizes he puts us upon, he is ready to assist us in. He does not expect that Men should climb to Heaven, and get above the Clouds without help. No, if we will strive lawfully, he will give the Victory. If we will climb, he will reach down his Hand and take us up. If we will stand on Tiptoe, he will give us Wings. If we will come to the Sea Shore, he will divide the Waters.

And thus I have offered several Considerations to reconcile and encourage you to this Violence.

The Advices need not be many, if you will do any thing to purpose.

1. Consult not with Flesh and Blood. You must resolve before hand to shut your Ears against all its Clamours and Solicitations. To be sure, this Violence will be ungrateful to the Part that must be mortified and kept under. The Flesh is too much a Party to be heard in its own Cause. If the Right-Eye therefore drop never so many Tears for Pity, it must not be spared, and though the Right-Hand should be lifted up asking for Mercy, it must find none. Flesh and Blood must not be consulted in this Violence. Whatever Remonstrances it make, it must be crucified. You must exercise Resolution, or there is nothing to be done, and cause all those eager Thirsts and Passions wherewith you burn, to yield to that more noble Thirst and Passion you have for the obtaining of this Kingdom.

2. 'Tis

2. 'Tis your wisest and safest way to begin this Violence betime. The earliest Attempts are most likely to succeed. I do not speak this to discourage elder Persons from offering Violence to this Kingdom, for 'tis better late than never; but however, the sooner you begin your Violence, the sooner may you expect to begin your Triumphs. The sooner you gird on the Harness, the sooner you may expect to boast of Victory. It is good for a Man that he bear the Yoke in his Youth. I told you, in beginning, that Youth was the most proper Season of Life, upon all Accounts, for the Exercise of this Violence. 'Tis the Age of Violence, I mean, that is more peculiarly dispos'd to it. Young Persons, we see, are naturally violent in the Course they take, whether towards Heaven or Hell; they drive furiously whatever Road they choose; they are violent in all their Motions, Designs, Inclinations and Pursuits. 'Tis of the highest Importance then that their Volatile and Active Spirits have a right Tendency given them at first. You that are young then, now is your time of Action. This is your Enterprizing Age, you must not think in old Age to arise and shake your selves as at other times, when your Strength and your God is departed from you. You will find it a bad time to exercise Violence in that Day, when Fears shall be in the Way, and the Grasshopper shall be a Burthen. Youth is the Season above all other for great and arduous Undertakings.

3. Take care to extend this Violence to all the Duties of Religion. Act with all your Might in whatever you engage. Whatever your Heads or Hearts, or Hands find to do, do it with your Might. There is a Violence to be exercised in every part of our Work, in every Duty we are call'd to, as in Praying, Hearing, Singing, receiving

30 The Power of Violence and Resolution

Dan. ix.
19.

Luk. xxii.
43. 44.

receiving the Holy Sacrament. In Praying, what Instances and Examples of this kind have we? You have heard how the foremention'd Patriarch wrestled with the Angel till he prevail'd. You see what Violence another Patriarch offers to God, in his Intercession for guilty Sodom, while every Grant encourages him to make larger Demands. You have MOSES again offering the like Violence to Heaven in the behalf of ISRAEL, while he stands between God and the People, and cries, *Blot me out of thy Book, &c.* The like may be observ'd of Holy DAVID in many of his Psalms, who observes not the Ardours of his devout Soul herein? The same of DANIEL in that excellent Prayer, recorded Chap. 9. 18. *O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord hearken and do, &c.* a Prayer, that with an inconceivable speed, drew the Angel GABRIEL from Heaven to Earth, with a quick and immediate Answer, *While I was Speaking and Praying, says he, the Man GABRIEL being caused to fly swiftly, touched me, who told him that at the beginning of his Supplication the Commandment came forth, or he received his Orders, and says he, I am come to shew thee, &c.* See the Power of Violence in this Duty of Prayer. But still the best and greatest Instance and Pattern of Violence in this respect is behind. Behold the Blessed JESUS, Praying till the Fashion of his Countenance is alter'd, till he is Transfigur'd before his Disciples, and till God himself descends in a bright Cloud upon the Mount. Behold him again in his Agony in the Garden, Praying yet more earnestly, and his Sweat as it were great Drops of Blood falling to the Ground. After this manner JESUS Prayed and made Supplications to his Father.

I might

I might, if there were occasion, proceed to shew, that the same *Violence* is required in every other Duty. As in *Hearing God's Word*, though a Duty we appear to be least *active* in, yet most certainly he that takes no Pains to Hear, Hears to little purpose. Again, in *Singing God's Praises*, herein we are called to imitate the *Violence* of the *Holy Angels* and of the *Cherubims*, when they strain their Songs, and cry to one another with loud Voices, *Holy, Holy, Holy, &c.* And as to the great Duty of receiving the *Holy Communion*, every one knows what *Violence* is required herein, that knows how hard a Matter 'tis to warm his frozen Heart, inflame his Desires, elevate his Hopes, and exercise his Graces. In short, there is no Duty whatever, but what requires *Violence*, a Man can neither Watch, nor Pray, nor Mortify Sin, nor deny himself, nor perform any worthy Deed or remarkable Act of Service either for God or Man, in the midst of so many Oppositions and Discouragements, without exercising *Violence*. There's nothing to be done in Religion without it.

4. Take care to maintain a steadiness and uniformity in the exercise of this *Violence*. Though a Man cannot at all times expect the same Enlargements and Elevations, yet there is a regularity, in some respects, to be observ'd even in the Zeal and Ardours of our Souls. Though the Flame may burn more bright at some times than at other, yet it must always give Light and Heat. We must be every Day striving, watching and contending for this Kingdom. We are like Men rowing against the Stream, while we intermit our *Violence*, we drive backward, and no longer advance than while we are tugging at the Oar.

5. *You will do well to manage your Violence with Prudence and Discretion.* A misguided Violence makes mad Work in Religion. Don't mistake me therefore, I am not calling you to be violent for a Party or for a particular Interest, or even for the lesser Things of Religion, but for the great Things of the Kingdom. Let us take heed therefore of mistaking *Wildfire* for Zeal, and unhallow'd Rage and Madness against those that differ from us, for the Sacred Violence CHRIST is recommending. No, my Friends, 'tis a Violence of another Kind and of another Tendency that you are called to.

6. *Take care above all to manage your Violence with Humility and Dependance.* Always remember the Words of JESUS, *Without me ye can do nothing.* Be sure engage not alone in such an Enterprize. Undertake nothing in your own Strength, who have such a Second. The CHRISTIANS main Art, and Skill, and Strength, lies in this Dependance. We have overcome when we have prayed, and believed, and learn'd to look to JESUS. When we have learn'd to offer Violence to GOD, we shall the more easily be able to offer Violence to our Lusts.

7. And lastly, *Continue your Violence till you are possess'd of the Kingdom.* You must not have done offering Violence, till you have entred the City Gates, and the Crown be set upon your Heads. We see Men in a Race, though they seem to have exerted all their Strength at first, yet, instead of slackning their Pace, they take new Heart as they approach the Goal, rouse their Spirits and collect all their Vigour to make the last effort, and seize the Prize. Thus should we, let a Man have begun never so well, he loses all his Pains unless he finish well.

And thus now I have set the Crown before you, and shewn you the way, if you have but Hearts to follow. Arise now and take the Kingdom.

It remains only that I answer a few Objections against this Violence.

Objection 1. Some will be apt to say, But what need all this ado, when less pains will serve the turn, why must People be put upon such Violent Measures for obtaining the Kingdom?

Answer. To this we answer, That we make no greater stir about these Matters than they require; or then even our Saviour himself did. You know what his Doctrine was, and who hath bid you strive to enter into the strait Gate; and hath told you, that many shall seek to enter, Luk. 13. and shall not be able. For our parts we can discover no other, nor no easier Path. And therefore if we, or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel let him be accursed. 24.

Objection 2. But you'll object again, That some have offer'd Violence, and yet come short of this Kingdom. They have called, and there has been none to Answer; and among others, Esau found no place for Repentance, though he sought it carefully with Tears.

Answer. To this I answer, That the Violence I have been speaking of is always successful, provided it be sincere and seasonable. I don't deny but that if Men will obstinately sin away their Day of Grace, hate Instruction, and set at nought all God's Counsel, that God may at length laugh at their Calamity, mock when their Fear cometh, and in his turn refuse to hear them who have refused to hear him. Take heed therefore of pushing matters to this extremity, by unreasonable and provoking Delays and Contempts of the

34 The Power of Violence and Resolution

Grace of God. As to the Instance of *ESAU*, it does not reach the Case; his *finding no place for Repentance*, being to be understood, of his not being able to recover his Birth-right, according to the Judgment of many Interpreters.

Objection 3. There are others who run away with the common and popular *Objection*, that all the *Violence* in the World won't obtain this *Kingdom*, if they are not *ordain'd* to it.

Answer. But to this there is a plain Answer, That an *hearty* and *sincere* Violence is the best evidence of our being *ordained* to this Kingdom, and our want of it, the surest Argument of the contrary. So that this *Objection* makes *for Violence*, and not *against* it. We know that God has decreed to save the *diligent* and *faithful*, and to reject the *wicked* and *slothful*, that will take no pains for this Kingdom; and this, one wou'd think, should be enough to put Men upon using *Violence* as the best means to make their *Calling and Election* sure. The Mariner in distress, does not stand still, and ask whether God have decreed to save him, but as the shortest way to know this, falls heartily to work, and does his utmost to preserve the sinking Vessel.

Object 4. But others are ready to *object* again, If there be so much *Violence* required; and if a Man must *exercise* so much *severity* upon himself, in order to obtain this Kingdom, how does Religion then appear to be such a *pleasant* and *delightful* thing as it is represented to be; what is become then of the so much talk'd of *Ways of Pleasantness*, and *Paths of Peace*?

Answer. To this I answer, That the Violence here requir'd, is no ways inconsistent with

with the *true* and *solid Pleasures* of the *Mind*, nor with the *innocent* and *lawful Pleasures* of the *Body*. When all is said, there is a secret *ravishing delight* in cutting off *right Hands*, and plucking out *right Eyes* for the sake of this *Kingdom*, (as one says) "There is a ravishing *W. Hop-*
" Joy and Pleasure, a still insinuating soft De- *kins.*
" light, that spreads it self secretly thorough
" the Soul, when a Man has been vigorously
" struggling with a Corruption. Though the
" Contest be troublesome, yet what a Calm
" follows, where Grace has obtain'd the Vi-
" ctory; not a Ruffle, not a Wrinkle upon
" the Face of the Soul: Oh, how sweetly doth
" it now enjoy its self and its God!

We find it thus by Experience: Though the *Conflict* be *bitter* and *tedious*, yet how *glorious* is the *Triumph*, when a Man has conquer'd a *reigning Lust*, or overcome an *evil Habit*? What an inward secret peace and satisfaction follows! How does the Soul feast on *hidden Manna*! what *Congratulations* between the Man and his *Conscience*! Oh enter then my Soul into the secrets of this Joy!

And then as to the *Pleasures of the Body*: This *Violence* I am speaking of, only retrenches their *Excesses*, without injury or lessening their *Sweetness*. Nay, I am perswaded, that those that offer the greatest *Violence* to their *forbidden Pleasures*, have the truest taste and relish of those that are *Innocent* and *Harmless*.

Objection 5. Others object further, That the more *Violence* they exercise, the more *Opposition* they stir up against themselves, and so but make their *Work* harder. Their *Violence* serves but to raise the Devil, and stir up all his *wrath* and *rage* against them; and to draw all

36 The Power of Violence and Resolution

the fury of Hell, and their own Lusts and Passions upon them. In short, they find Opposition swells to a Flood, and the more they strive, the more they are born down.

Answer. To this I answer, That 'tis a common thing for the Devil to raise a Storm against the Soul that is ready to enter the Port and seize the Crown: But be of good Courage, you are never more secure, nor nearer Heaven, nor more likely to succeed in the Glorious Enterprize, than when the Devil's rage and fury runs highest, and he raises most opposition against you from all Quarters. He is come down against you in great wrath, because he knows his time is but short. Know, for your comfort, that these are some of the last struggles that the Devil and your Lusts are making, before they give you up. This is but the parting blow before he quit his Hold. After this same manner the Devil took his leave of the poor possess'd Man in the Gospel, by throwing him to the Ground, and rending of him before he departed from him. Have a little Patience then, those storms will quickly blow over.

Objection 6. There's one Objection still behind, which methinks for the Honour of Religion, I am loth to mention, and that is, That so little of the Violence I have been speaking of, is to be seen in the Lives of its Professors. What do they more than others? For ought we see (a few Formalities excepted) they take as little pains for Heaven as others, and deny their Passions and Appetites as little as their Neighbours.

Answer. To this I answer, I confess that this is a sad and melancholy Charge, and woe to those Christians, who by their Sensuality and Carnal Indulgences, under that Sacred Name,

prove a *stumbling Block* to their Neighbours. It is to be fear'd there are too many of that kind among us, of whom the *Apostle* somewhere says, *I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are Enemies to the Cross of Christ, whose God is their Belly, whose Glory is in their shame, who mind Earthly things:* And even as to the best of Christians, it must be confess'd that they take too little Pains, and exercise too little Violence for the obtaining of that Kingdom. But this all sincere Christians carry as their daily grief and shame, this they bitterly lament and bewail. And this it must be acknowledg'd, shews the weakness of their Faith, the strength of their Corruptions, and the Imperfections of their Graces.

Phil. 3.18.

You see then upon the whole, of how little weight all your Objections against this Violence are: Now therefore, to draw towards a Conclusion, you have had the *Glorious Enterprize* in my Text set before you, with the Means of succeeding herein.

And now, my Friends, 'tis time to know your Resolutions, and to ask what you intend to do. What say you, have you a mind to possess this Kingdom or no? If you have, I demand further, Have you any Heart to take pains for it, and offer violence to it? What do you mean to do? Will you arise and gird your selves, or are you resolv'd to lie still, and let your Lives rot away in inglorious Sloth and Ease?

Have you the Faith of Christians? Do you believe the Scriptures, and the Great and Glorious things that are therein spoken of this Kingdom? Do you believe its blessed Revelation is near, and the Glories of this Kingdom ready to be display'd before all the World?

You are projecting Imaginary Schemes (some of you) to *advance your selves and your Families* in the World, while your Ambition is inflam'd with the prospect; but after all your *vain Hopes and fruitless Cares and Toils*, what *empty Dreams and Amusements*, are you fondly taken up with? What *disappearing, vanishing Clouds* are you pursuing and embracing? How *mean and unworthy* is the Design, how *poor the Purchase*, how *short-liv'd the Enjoyment and Possession*? What a *small matter* is it after all, to live in a little *better fashion* than your Neighbours, and to bear a little more *Port and State* than others, for a few *Years*? What will it signify when you come to *die*, which may be to-morrow, what *figure* you or yours have ever made in this *Transitory World*?

But here now I am shewing you a way to make *your selves and your Families* after you *great* for ever. I am putting you upon an *Enterprize* that will better answer your designs of *Honour and Greatness*: 'Tis true it will cost you *pains, sweat and labour*, and so will any *Enterprize* of *weight and moment*. And can you better bestow your *pains and labour* than on *this*?

Once more, Behold the *glorious Prize*, poize the *weighty Crown*, and survey the *Heavenly Kingdom*. Can you so easily lose it, and be content to fall short of it?

Look yonder is that *Kingdom of Light*, where God himself *dwelleth in Light*, and where the *Saints dwell and reign*, and *shine* for ever.

Yonder is that *Kingdom of Life and Immortality*, where *Life dwelleth in Perfection*; where the *Happy Souls* pluck and eat of the *Fruit of the Tree of Life*, and live for ever.

Yonder is that *Kingdom of Peace, Love and Joy*, where each of these reign undisturb'd for ever.

Yonder is that *Kingdom of Righteousness*, after which you have been so long *aspiring*; and into which the *Spirits of just Men made perfect* are already entred.

Oh what a *Priviledge* to have a *Seat, a Room, a Place, a Throne, a Mansion, a Post of Honour* in this *Kingdom*!

Well, if others refuse it, let the *Young Persons* here present step up and seize it before them. If others draw back, arise you and take their *Crown*. Leave them the *World*, and let them make the most of it, and take you the *Kingdom*. Thus while their *Fathers* despised the good *Land*, the young *Generation* in the *Wilderness* arose and took it.

You are the *Hopes*, my *Friends*, of the next *Generation*; would to God I cou'd raise an *ardour* in your *Breasts*, and engage you *heartily* in the *Glorious Attempt*. *Religion* will sink in the next *Age*, if the *Youths* of this do not support it. All *Eyes* are on you; therefore look to your selves. Your *Lot* is cast in an *evil Day*. Your *Temptations* and *Dangers* are great. 'Tis lamentable to consider, what a *Spirit of Giddiness* and *Inconstancy*, nay what a *Spirit of Prophaneness, Looseness, Immorality* and *Debauchery* is gone forth among the *Young People* of this *Age*!

Oh my *Friends*, what an *Honour* would it be to You to *distinguish* your selves in these *Times*, and to find courage to make a *stand* for serious *Godliness*! What an *Honourable Mark* did God put upon the whole *Tribe of LEVI*, when they stood alone and took God's part in a time of *General Defection*? Well, shall

40 *The Power of Violence and Resolution*

I ask you, *What is on the Lord's side among you to Day?* Oh, how might such as would distinguish themselves in the Cause of God to day, expect to shine with a peculiar Lustre in this Kingdom!

Come, resolve then, before you go hence, to offer Violence hereto. Alas, what poor Charms are they which hold you back? A Painted World, a Blaze of false Joy, a course Entertainment, a short and base Gratification of Sense, a Breath of dying Honour, &c.

Oh, how easily methinks might a Resolute Man, break through all these, to seize the Immortal Crown!

F I N I S.



Just Published,

THE Life of the Reverend Mr. George Trosse, late Minister of the Gospel in Exon. Containing
I. An Abridgment of his own Narrative. II. A further Account of his Life and Death. III. A Collection out of his Sermons; with some of his Letters. By Isaac Gilling. With a Preface, by the Reverend Dr. Calamy, &c. Octavo.

on

you

lin-

ex-

this

to

are

world,

at, a

a

lv'd

Im-

, land

ining

A fur-

Colle

ments

erem